

REMARKS

The pending Office Action addresses and rejects claims 1, 3-9, 12-28, 36, 38, 39, 41, and 42.

At the outset, Applicants thank Examiner Bottorff for extending the courtesy of a telephone interview to Applicants' undersigned attorney on March 29, 2006. In the interview, agreement was reached that the above amendments distinguish over the pending rejections.

Amendments

Applicants amend independent claim 1 to delete the term "ball-and-socket," and to recite that the connecting element has a convex outer surface that interfaces with a concave inner surface of the opening in the base plate. Support for this amendment can be found throughout the specification, and in the claims, for example, in claim 18.

Claim 13 is amended to include the limitations of claims 17 and 18, which are now cancelled.

Allowable claim 21 is amended into independent format to include the limitations of claim 13.

Claim 25 is amended to recite that the base plate includes a concave opening and the connecting element includes a convex surface. Support for this amendment can be found throughout the specification, and in the claims, for example, in claim 18.

Applicants cancel claims 36 and 38-39, 41, and 42. Applicants reserve the right to pursue these claims in a continuation application.

No new matter is added.

Rejections Pursuant to 35 U.S.C. §112

Claims 1, 3-9, 12, 36, 38, 39, and 41 are rejected pursuant to 35 U.S.C. §112, first paragraph, as failing to comply with the written description requirement. In particular, the Examiner submits that the "ball-and-socket" connection is not supported in the specification. Applicants disagree, and refer the Examiner to page 3, lines 12-18. However, in an effort to expedite prosecution, Applicants have deleted this term from claim 1, and claims 36 and 41 are cancelled, thereby obviating the basis for this rejection.

The Examiner also rejects claims 1, 3-9, 12-28, 36, 38, 39, and 41 pursuant to 35 U.S.C.

§112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention. In particular, the Examiner argues that Applicant's definition of "pivotal" on page 5, lines 6-8 of the specification is unclear. This definition was previously deleted from the specification, thereby obviating the basis for this rejection.

Claim Rejections Pursuant to 35 U.S.C. 102(b) and 103(a)


The Examiner rejects claims 1, 4, 12-14, 17, 19, 20, 23, 24, 26, 27, 28, 36, 38, 39, 41, and 42 pursuant to 35 U.S.C. §102(b), and claims 5, 9, 15, 16, 22, and 25 pursuant to 35 U.S.C. §103(a). As noted above, the Examiner has agreed that the amendments to the claims distinguish over the pending rejections.

Conclusion

In conclusion, Applicants submit that all pending claims are now in condition for allowance, and allowance thereof is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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